

NAVY Supply Corps

It's Your Education Supplement

A NAVIGATION GUIDE TO BUSINESS SCHOOL



MBA



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PURPOSE

Post-graduate education is an important part of your progression as a Supply Officer. This document provides guidance to assist you in your pursuit of an MBA via the Navy-funded 810 program, as well as other civilian institution opportunities.

The major hurdles that must be conquered to get into an MBA program are: the Graduate Management Admissions Test (GMAT) or Graduate Record Examination (GRE), the school application(s), and the interview(s). This document serves as a guide through this process. The recommendations in this pamphlet are by no means all inclusive. Seek out personnel who have been where you want to go and ask them for suggestions, communicate with admissions staff at the schools you desire to attend, and use all information available to you. Finally, the website <http://poetsandquants.com> is an excellent resource for all aspects of the MBA experience.

TAKING/RE-TAKING THE GMAT/GRE

The GMAT, considered by many to be the most critical component of the application, is a prerequisite to the 810 program and is a required prerequisite in the majority of MBA programs available. While no minimum score is required to apply for the 810 program, you may wish to improve your score to better your chances of being accepted to your desired programs. According to survey data submitted to *US News & World Report*, the average student accepted into a full-time MBA program at one of the top 10 schools in 2014 had an average GMAT score of 715 or higher.

Depending on the school(s) to which you are applying, your GMAT score could serve different purposes. It could be a strong indicator of your analytical abilities, especially important if you

are pursuing acceptance to a school that emphasizes data analytics. Based on the historical spread of accepted students at a given school, your score can also give you a cursory indication of whether or not the school is a “back-up,” a “hopeful,” or a “reach” school.

Conquering the GMAT

There are many methods to help you improve your GMAT score:

Internet websites such as *US News & World Report* and *Veritas Prep* are good examples. Other methods include self-help books, MBA preparation courses, and good old-fashioned flash cards.

The “Do’s & Don’ts” of taking the GMAT:

DO:

- Start early. GMAT scores remain valid up to 5 years from the date the exam was taken, and it is generally acceptable to only report your highest score as part of the application. Work to achieve your best score as early as possible to allow yourself time to craft more competitive applications to your target schools.
- Consider taking an MBA preparatory course. Ranging in cost from a few hundred to thousands of dollars, many of them boast a noticeable improvement in scores based on exposing students to proven test-taking strategies, allowing students to assess their abilities while increasing familiarity with the testing format.
- Plan to take the exam more than once. Exam scores generally improve the second time you take it.
- Consider the GRE vice the GMAT. Many schools will accept the GRE in place of the GMAT, but you need to know first.
- While admissions websites may state that there is no minimum score required on the GMAT or GRE, common

sense suggests doing well will enhance your chances at acceptance.

DON'T:

- Refuse a score when finished with the test. You will get this option, but you'll never know how well you've done and schools only consider the highest score.

CHOOSING A BUSINESS SCHOOL

School Research

At this point, you should choose the business schools you want to apply to. Choosing the right business school is more than choosing the program with the highest ranking on the latest *Businessweek* list. The right business school for you will match your preferences for learning style, location, culture, cohort size, extracurricular opportunities, family needs, and much more. To elaborate further:

- a) Learning Style. How do you learn best? Is it through experiential and collaborative team projects? Is it by reading case studies and deliberating the issues through rigorous class discussion? Is it through traditional lecture and note taking classes? Or perhaps, it's a combination of each.
- b) Location. There are great schools to choose from across the United States. Do you want to go somewhere new? Do you want to be near a fleet concentration area in order to stay connected with the local Supply Corps Foundation chapter and mentors? Do you want to position yourself for a job at a specific command in the same geographic area as your school?
- c) Culture. Every school will tell you their culture is the best. But, does it fit your personality? Will you enjoy your time there and use it to build lasting relationships? Some

schools thrive on competition, some on collaboration, and some on diversity. You will need to research the schools you are interested in, talk to current and former students, and most importantly, visit the schools (if your personal budget and schedule allows) to really understand this nebulous, but extremely important, factor.

- d) Cohort Size. Cohort size, or the total number of students in the admitted class, can vary widely. Some schools have as few as 200 students per year, while larger schools have more than 1,000. This will directly impact your individual class size, the school's culture, opportunities available, alumni base, and your experience.
- e) Curricula. Some schools mandate required courses with little option for electives while others allow more flexibility to choose electives. This will be a personal choice. There are specific curricula requirements to keep in mind for award of the Supply Distribution Management, or 1301, subspecialty code. These are discussed later in this pamphlet.
- f) Extracurricular Opportunities. Consider the intramural sports offered and social/academic clubs that are available. Does the school have a strong Veteran's club? The course work at your school will be overwhelming at times; you may want healthy outlets and activities to help you balance your schedule.
- g) Family Needs. If married, or in a committed relationship, you should consider what your partner might need or prefer. If you have kids, you'll have to consider if the location of your chosen school(s) offers equally great opportunities for your children.

Many more options are available to those officers who are pursuing a non-Navy funded MBA. One year, executive and online MBA programs are available from most schools.

1-Yr MBA: One year programs have been highly successful in Europe for several years and have grown in popularity in the US in recent years. One year programs are very intense and officers considering this option should research the amount of work and time involved. Due to the intensity of the program, an undergraduate degree in business and a strong business background is recommended.

EX-MBA: Executive MBA programs are very popular. They are tailored for mid-career professionals, which puts them in line with post-graduate education expectations of the Supply Corps. These programs are accelerated programs and require significant expenditure of time and effort to complete.

e-MBA: Online education was once scoffed at but the quality and caliber of online MBA programs has increased in recent years with offerings from some of the top business schools in the world. The online programs are just as selective (and expensive) as brick and mortar options. The advantage of this route is the ability to enter a world class program regardless of location. This format is believed to require more motivation and discipline, as well as excellent time management skills, to be successful. The online format also maximizes the use of technology which arguably better prepares graduates to navigate the globally-connected business world upon completion.

The “Do’s & Don’ts” of choosing your school(s):

DO:

- Apply to your top choice schools. Use every resource available to research schools. Check websites, attend admission events and open houses, and reach out and speak to admission counselors and alumni.
- Apply to more than one school. The optimum number is likely between four and six schools. Too few diminishes

your opportunities and too many will likely cause burnout during the application process.

DON'T:

- Rely solely on rankings. Use the suggestions noted earlier in this section and you will find the school that will be challenging, stimulating, and best suited for you.

Campus Visits

One of the best ways to research a school is to visit it. If your schedule allows, take full advantage of the opportunity – meet with the admissions staff, talk with current students and professors, and sit through a class or two. Many schools offer specific programs that match up “ambassadors” within the enrolled class to escort interested prospective students and answer any questions while attending their class sessions. Contact the schools you are interested in visiting. This shows them you are interested and allows you the opportunity to get a more in-depth knowledge of the services offered by the school. Some schools offer virtual tours via online webinar if you are unable to visit in person. Finally, contact each prospective school’s Veteran’s Club. These organizations often have a lot of influence and do a great job of walking interested applicants through the process.

APPLYING TO BUSINESS SCHOOL

Application Rounds

MBA program application deadlines are generally offered three times a year: fall, winter and spring. Some schools have as many as four or five application deadlines. You need to consider this when selecting schools to which you plan to apply. Ensure you know the deadlines for each application round and adhere to them. Application round dates can be found on the websites of all MBA schools.

The Application

The application for admission is a complete package comprised of six major parts: your GMAT/GRE score, your professional resume, essays, recommendations, interviews, and your undergraduate education (school, major, GPA).

Professional Resume

The key here is to highlight all the amazing accomplishments you have achieved across your Navy (and possibly civilian) career in one or two pages. Do not make this a laundry list of your duties and responsibilities and be careful not to confuse action with accomplishment.

The “Do’s & Don’ts” of your professional resume:

DO:

- Indicate cause and effect with each resume bullet listed. Make it clear to the reader how your actions improved quality, performance, morale, etc.
- Take some semantic liberties when you write your resume. These are civilian admissions staff members reading your resume, so know your audience. For example, you are not a Supply Officer, you’re a Logistics Officer. Have a civilian friend read it for comprehension. If your friend doesn’t understand what you’ve written, then it will likely be lost on the admissions board as well.
- Summarize your recent jobs in more detail than older jobs. These are more of an indication of who you are today and should be given more focus.
- Include your professional accomplishment such as warfare qualifications, DAWIA certifications, etc.
- Include hobbies or something personal and interesting about yourself. You want the admissions board to remember you.

DON'T:

- Use military-specific acronyms or jargon.
- Try to summarize years of experience on your resume. Your resume should be no longer than two pages typed. Include those positions and accomplishments that are most significant.

Essays

Essays are crucial to the application process. They are your first chance at dialogue with the school. Make that first impression count. The primary purpose of the essays is to show the admissions staff what sets you apart from the other applicants. Schools generally provide the essay questions and they change often; there is no “one-size fits all” approach.

The “Do’s and Don’ts” of writing your essay(s):

DO:

- Assess your writing abilities; look for areas of improvement, and write numerous revisions of your essays until you reach a draft you are satisfied with.
- Seek others whose opinion you value to read your essay(s).
- Include remarks in your essay that indicate you have conducted a campus visit. This shows the reader that you have invested some amount of time, and perhaps money, to learn more about the school and their program.
- If needed, consider hiring a writing coach to assist in refining your essay(s).
- Focus on your leadership experience. Military officers are leaders by nature, and this is where you have an advantage over the typical MBA candidate. Many of your peers who are also seeking acceptance are pursuing an MBA to climb the corporate ladder. Many of them have

become technical experts in their field, but have never had the opportunity to lead a team.

- Place emphasis on your experience, but tell the reader how a degree from their school will help you achieve your future goals. Admissions staffs often look to project the student's long-term potential vice their immediate credentials.
- Find the intersection of your talents, passion, and purpose in order to derive a unique expression of your own unique potential.

DON'T:

- Fail to answer the question(s).
- Submit an essay containing grammatical errors.
- Be impersonal: the essays are from you and about you, so make the reader feel like he or she is getting to know you.
- Exceed the recommended page or word count.

There is no shortage of help for writing essays. Numerous books have been written on the subject and there are several websites on the Internet. Some websites to help you with essays include:

http://www.bloomberg.com/bschools/content/jul2009/bs20090713_703433.htm

<http://www.princetonreview.com/business-school-advice/essay-tips>

<http://www.majortests.com/gmat/mba-essay.php>

Letters of Recommendation

Letters of recommendation matter a great deal in the admissions process. They are viewed as an objective, third-party measure of your suitability for the program to which you are applying. Schools often vary in the number and types of recommendation letters required. Remember that honesty backed by facts and data will pay huge dividends in your favor.

The “Do’s and Don’ts” of recommendation letters:

DO:

- Make sure that the individuals you request to write your recommendations know you well, will represent you well, and can write well.
- Ideally, seek recommendations from your most recent direct supervisors who know your work best; however, it’s generally acceptable to go back about five years. Select people who know your work and can attest to your managerial and leadership skills.
- Manage the people recommending you. Ensure they know their deadline for completing the recommendation.

DON’T:

- Assume they know what to say. You shouldn’t write the letter for them, but make sure they have an idea of what direction(s) you would like the letter to be written.
- Put them in a time crunch. Give them plenty of time to write the letter of recommendation.
- Seek the recommendation from an Admiral or senior executive with whom you’ve never actually worked. Admission staff can see through these hollow letters and would much prefer to read a recommendation from someone who obviously knows you and your work.

The Interview

Once your application has been reviewed against all other applicants within a given round, you may be called upon to interview – this is a good thing! It means you’ve reached the final step in the application process. Interviews are usually conducted on-campus with admissions staff personnel, second year MBA students, and/or university alumni. This is the preferred interview type and the most prevalent. However,

given that military applicants are often unable to travel to campus due to deployments and operational commitments, many schools offer alternatives to the traditional on-site interview – primarily, VTC or phone. Interview questions can be very similar to the essay questions listed above; however, you won't likely have speaking notes in front of you during the interview (unless you are on VTC/phone).

The “Do’s and Don’ts” of interviews:

DO:

- Practice for your interview. Conduct mock interviews with those that you trust to receive feedback on your responses, demeanor, clarity, and confidence. Also consider recording your mock interview to review later for improvement. Rehearsing and refining your interview skills will only result in a much more polished presentation during the actual school interview.
- Develop five to seven short anecdotes based on your experiences (personal and professional) upon which you can give concrete numbers and facts and that will demonstrate your passion, leadership, personality, and most importantly, “fit” with the program for which you are interviewing. No matter what the question, find a way to bring these well-polished examples of your successes into the conversation.
- Practice good basic interview protocol:
 - a. Be on time. Never be late for an interview. Give yourself plenty of travel time, drive the route in advance and always have contact information in case of an unexpected traffic tie-up or unforeseen emergency.
 - b. Maintain good eye contact and posture. This shows the interviewer you are interested and engaged in the conversation and exudes confidence.

- c. Address the question that is being asked. Avoid getting off track with your answers.
- d. Have questions of your own. Most interviews will include a session where the prospective student gets to ask the questions. Have four to five questions reflecting the business school and your particular areas of interest. Your questions should be thought provoking as these provide the interviewer with insight into your thought process.
- e. Dress for success. Attention to detail is another key trait of leadership. Professional attire, polished shoes, and extra copies of your resume go a long way to enhance your impression on the interviewer. Remember, you are seeking acceptance to some of the finest civilian business schools in the country, so dress like a civilian.

DON'T:

- React negatively to the interviewer or to a particular question. Keeping your composure during the interview shows your maturity, which is another key aspect of the leadership they are looking for.
- Pretend to be someone you are not. You will fail. Admissions interviewers have a lot of experience meeting people and conducting interviews and will see through attempts to portray yourself as someone you are not. Be yourself and remember that first impressions are lasting ones. In this case, probably your only one.

Undergraduate Education

Some MBA programs have undergraduate course prerequisites. You may have to take some undergraduate courses to enhance your educational background prior to applying to the schools of your choosing. Refer to the individual course requirements of the colleges you desire to apply to for this determination. In

some cases, even once accepted, the school may require you to enroll in a refresher class to brush-up on any topics they feel are critical to help with the classes you'll be taking as part of the MBA experience.

Many believe your previous academic record predicts your future academic success, and while this is sometimes true, your time in the military has taught you discipline, dedication, and determination. The admissions board recognizes this fact and will often overlook average undergraduate records. Also considered is the perceived difficulty of the school, the technical difficulty of a major, and your extracurricular and leadership involvement.

YOUR MBA EXPERIENCE

Choosing Your MBA Concentration

Many schools now offer multiple concentration areas so that students may better customize their MBA experience. This is most often accomplished by requiring students to take some number of core MBA courses, followed by the balance of courses in their particular area of concentration. When choosing a concentration, students must find the balance between what they desire and what is good for their naval career. For 810 students, this becomes less of a choice. All coursework taken as part of the 810 program is vetted through the Supply Corps Career Counselor and Naval Postgraduate CIVINS program office to ensure that students are taking courses suitable to earn the 1301 subspecialty code for specialization in Supply Distribution Management.

If you are self-funding your MBA, but still want to attain a degree that the Supply Corps values, then you must also choose courses and concentrations that align with the primary lines of operation of the Supply Corps: acquisition, operational logistics, and supply chain management. Therefore, choosing to

concentrate in marketing or real estate may prove less valuable than concentrating in supply chain management.

1301 Subspecialty/ESR/CSR Explanation

If the goal of getting your MBA, whether self-funded or Navy-funded, is to attain a degree that aligns with the supply acquisition and distribution management line of operation, then you must pay attention to the biannually published Educational Skills Requirements (ESRs) and Critical Skills Requirements (CSRs) for the 1301 subspecialty. These are reviewed and updated every two years by NAVSUP OP and staffed to the Naval Postgraduate School and OPNAV for concurrence and final approval. These documents outline the mandatory subject areas for courses that must be taken in order to be awarded the 1301 SUBSPEC (for example, finance, accounting, statistics, ethics, management, etc.). Please consult with the [Supply Corps Career Counselor](#) before finalizing your course listing to ensure you are taking courses that meet the criteria mentioned above.

DIRECTORY

NAVSUP OP/PERS 4412 Directory

Director, Supply Corps Personnel (OP)	901-874-4600
Special Assistant to OP (OPA)	901-874-4609
Management Analyst / PERS4412 Placement	901-874-4610
Administrative Assistant	901-874-4611
LPO/Detailing Assistant	901-874-3583

Director, Detailing Division (OP1)	901-874-4607
Special Assistant to OP1 (OP1A)	901-874-4608
Detailing Assistant	901-874-4602
LCDR Detailer / "Pit Boss"	901-874-4601
LT Operational & PG School Detailer	901-874-4627
LT Shore / Internship / Overseas Detailer	901-874-2936
ENS/LDO/CWO Detailer	901-874-4613
GSA Detailer / FTS Management Branch	901-874-4620

Director, Officer Plans (OP3)	901-874-4623
Deputy, Officers Plans / Reserve Programs	901-874-4621
Supply Corps Career Counselor	901-874-4624
Asst Career Counselor/Reserve Mgmt Analyst	901-874-4622
Program Analyst / Manpower	901-874-2193
Accessions Officer / Internship Program	901-874-4273

BUPERS 3

Supply Corps Officer Community Manager	901-874-3189
Asst Supply Corps Officer Community Manager	901-874-3133
Director, Enlisted Plans Division	901-874-2823

NPC

Enlisted Rating Assignment Officer	901-874-3731
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NAVY

Supply Corps

Supply Corps Personnel

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<http://www.public.navy.mil/bupers-npc/officer/Detailing/r1staffcorps/supply/Pages/CareerCounselor.aspx>